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**POD Wake Co Newsletter- August 2018**

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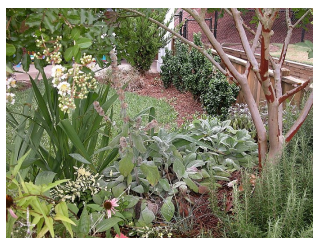
Natural Learning Initiative: POD Wake Co Newsletter- August 2018



## Affordable Settings and Elements



Bringing significant change to a play environment does not require endless resources. With a few easy-to-find materials and willing volunteers, many settings and elements can be created to greatly improve children's spaces. A fallen tree, cut into log segments, can become seats or an edge for a sand play area. Bamboo poles and some green bean seeds can form an almost instant teepee. The [Affordable Settings and Elements: Ideas for Cost Effective Solutions](#) infosheet, provides examples of how creative problem solving and resourcefulness can provide cost effective ways to enrich early childhood outdoor spaces.



### Examples of Affordable Settings and Elements:

1. Vine teepee
2. Wildflower garden
3. Log seats
4. Tire planters
5. Tire cookies

Find additional information on [Affordable Settings & Elements](#).

Find infosheet on creating affordable setting and element such as: [Creating Straw Bales](#), [Creating a Vine Teepee](#), [Installing Stepping Stones](#) and [Children's Vegetable Garden](#) on NLI's resource page.

Natural Learning Initiative's [Green Desk](#) has great resources on outdoor learning environments for children. Find information at [naturalearning.org](http://naturalearning.org)

## August Activity



### Cooking with Nature

Imaginative play can be a lot of fun for all those involved. Why not cook with nature and enjoy mud pies or stone soup. Use baking trays, bowls, spoons, and other kitchen utensils to make recipes from items found outside.

Need a recipe? Try Stone soup. Stone soup is easy to make if you have a pot or bucket, water, and stones. Have a fun time cooking outdoors; ending the activity with a great "feast" where children can enjoy their creations. Read [Stone Soup](#) by Jon J Muth, to provide children inspiration on working together to create their very own stone soup!

**Bon Appetit!**

## Plant of the Month

### Lamb's Ear, *Stachys byzantina*

Grown for its soft, fuzzy foliage, Lamb's Ear is a great addition to the outdoor learning environment (OLE). Originally from Iran, this perennial provides excellent ground-cover; producing bright purple/pink flowers in mid-summer. In addition to being an attractive plant, the soft leaves also provide a great sensory experience for children, helping to enhance learning and development.



To learn more about Lamb's Ear...

## Facts:

[Click Here](#)

- Height: 12-15 in.
- Foliage: 4 in. long velvety soft, lamb's ear-shaped leaves; light gray-green and covered with white hairs.
- Exposure: Full sun
- Soil: Well drained
- Region: Mountains, Piedmont, Coastal Plains

Learn more about Lamb's Ear or other plants from your local cooperative extension agent.

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## Recipe

Watermelon Agua Fresca

**Prep time:** 10 mins **Cook time:** 0 mins **Total time:** 10 mins **Makes:** 1 Quart

### INGREDIENTS:

2 1/4 pounds cold, chopped seedless watermelon

1 cup cold water

1 tablespoon fresh squeezed lemon juice, or lime juice

1 1/2 tablespoon honey



### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Put the watermelon pieces, water, lime or lemon juice, mint and honey into blender.
2. Blend ingredients until the mixture is smooth.
3. Serve right away or cover and refrigerate up to 4 hours. Make sure to stir before serving.
4. Enjoy!

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